



View of Millstream at Arkwright.



Interlaken Mill Bridge (c. 1885); Arkwright.
(Map # 2-C)

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The textile mills were Coventry's economic mainstay until the early twentieth century when the industry suffered a general and extensive decline. Many businesses relocated in the South and a number of Coventry mills closed for good. Nonetheless, the textile industry is still the town's largest employer, accounting for over 38 per cent of all manufacturing employment. The mills at Anthony, Quidnick, Harris, Arkwright and Coventry Centre are all still in use, although some have been converted to accommodate other light-manufacturing industries.

With the upgrading of state roads, like Routes 102 and 117, in the 1920s and, more recently, with the construction of a connector from Route 3 to Interstate 95, highways are bringing Coventry closer to metropolitan Providence. As a result, the eastern half of the township is again experiencing development in the form of new homes near the established centers, as well as resort homes situated alongside the old mill reservoirs at Tiogue, Flat River and Quidnick.

SUMMARY

Taken together, the sites and structures recorded by this preliminary survey illustrate the emergence of Coventry from a rural colonial town to an industrial center in the Pawtuxet River Valley while still retaining much of the richness of its agricultural past in the western half of the township.

The following inventory is an annotated compendium of the sites and structures which the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission considers to be of particular importance to the town's heritage and worthy of preservation. Future planning decisions affecting these properties should take into consideration their significance.



Double Mill Houses (c. 1848); Hill Farm Road, Coventry Centre.
(Map # 13-G)



Foster Ledge Quarrymen's House (c. 1862); Trestle Trail,
Coventry Centre. (Map # 13-P)

II. THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places is a record maintained by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, of structures, sites, areas and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology and culture. It is the official inventory of the nation's cultural and historical resources which are worthy of preservation. National Historic Landmarks, the nation's most historically important buildings and sites, are included in the National Register of Historic Places as well as other properties of national, state and local significance which have been nominated by the states and approved by the National Park Service.

Several Coventry structures are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Placement in the Register affords them a limited form of protection from potentially damaging federal programs through a review process. They are also eligible for certain tax benefits and federally funded matching grants-in-aid for restoration (the Nathanael Greene Homestead, for example, received a \$2,000 matching grant in 1972). As a result of this survey a number of additional structures, sites and districts have been recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The list of possible National Register properties should not be considered final and absolute. As new research is conducted, as the town changes physically and as perspectives on the community's history and what cultural properties are worth saving evolve, other potential candidates for the Register may be identified.

Structures already listed in the National Register of Historic Places

Nathanael Greene Homestead, Taft Street, Anthony (1-E)*
(also a National Historic Landmark)

Waterman Tavern, Maple Valley Road, Potterville (28)

Paine House, Station Street, Washington (42-Q)

For a more detailed description see Inventory and the National Register file at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

Structures, Sites and Districts Recommended for Nomination to The National Register of Historic Places (See Inventory for descriptions)

Anthony Mill, Washington Street, Anthony (1-G)

Interlaken Mill Bridge, Arkwright (2-C)

Arkwright Bridge, Arkwright (2-B)

Nicholas Farm, Nicholas Road (65)

Harris Mill Village Historic District (23)

Hill Farm, Hill Farm Road (24)

Town Asylum-Poor Farm, Town Farm Road (33)

Isaac Bowen House, Waterman Hill Road (36)

Potter-Moore House, Route 102 (71)

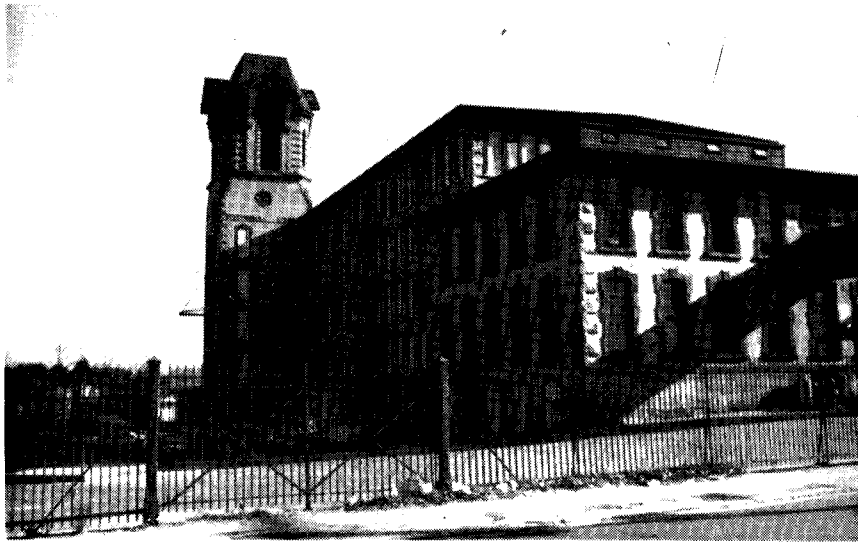
Rice City Historic District (38)

Read Schoolhouse, Flat River Road (50)

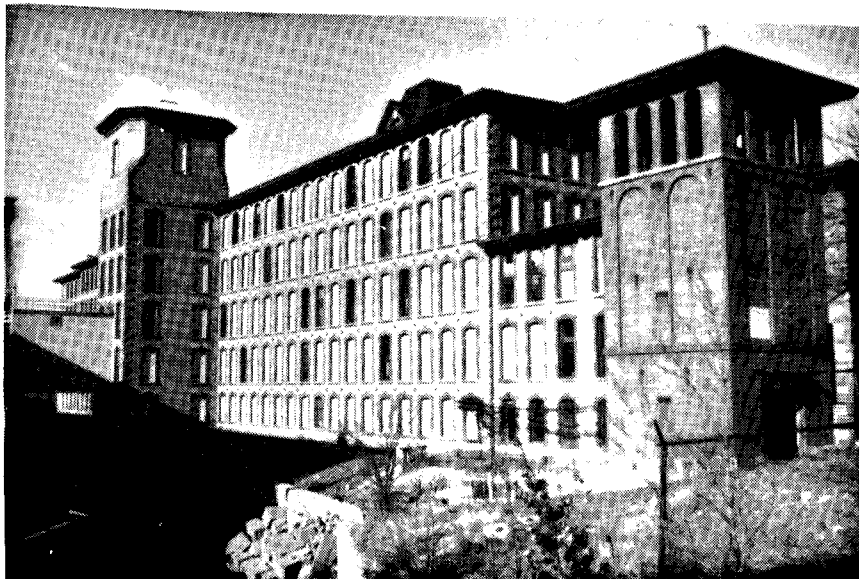
Ruins of Arnold Acid Works, House and Cemetery Number Forty-Two,
Flat River Road (53)

Maple Root Baptist Church, Harkney Hill Road (55)

*Letter and number codes appearing in parenthesis following each designated property in this list are those which identify these properties in the Inventory and on the survey map.



Anthony Mill (1874); Washington Street, Anthony.
Front View. (Map # 1-G)



Anthony Mill. Rear View

III. PRELIMINARY INVENTORY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES IN COVENTRY

This inventory is an annotated key to the preliminary survey map of Coventry. The numbers refer to the map at the back of the report (e.g. 1--Anthony village).

A more detailed map at a scale of 1"=1000' which locates properties and outlines districts more fully and precisely is on file at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission and in the Coventry Town House; copies have also gone to the State Department of Transportation, the Statewide Planning Program and the Department of Community Affairs.

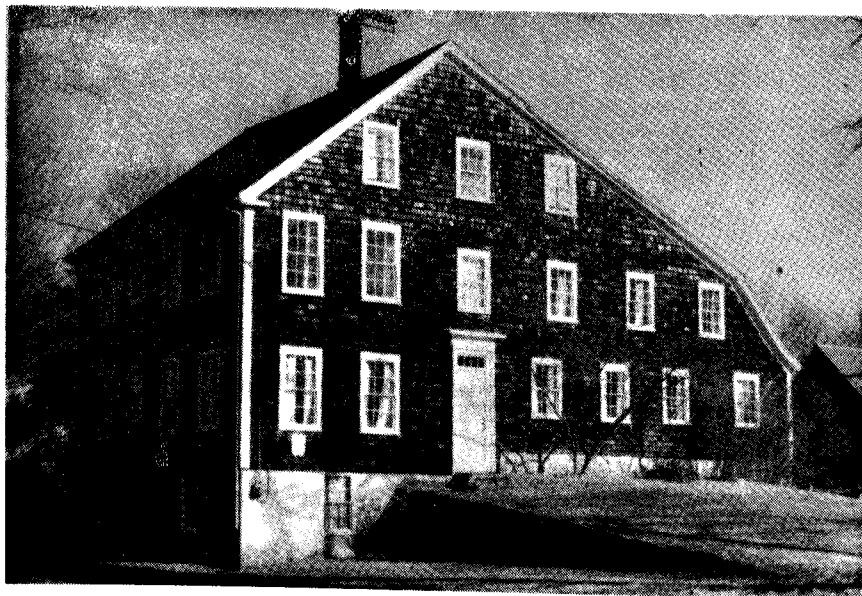
Material in this inventory is presented by geographic area--village by village, arranged alphabetically. Each village inventory is preceded by a summary of the village's developmental history. These inventories are followed by a listing of structures and sites located outside village centers. These are presented alphabetically by road with properties on those roads presented in numerical order. Dating of structures, or their historical and architectural period, is determined by use of markers, written material, nineteenth-century maps and knowledgeable residents or by an examination of architectural style and the use of certain construction materials.

1. ANTHONY

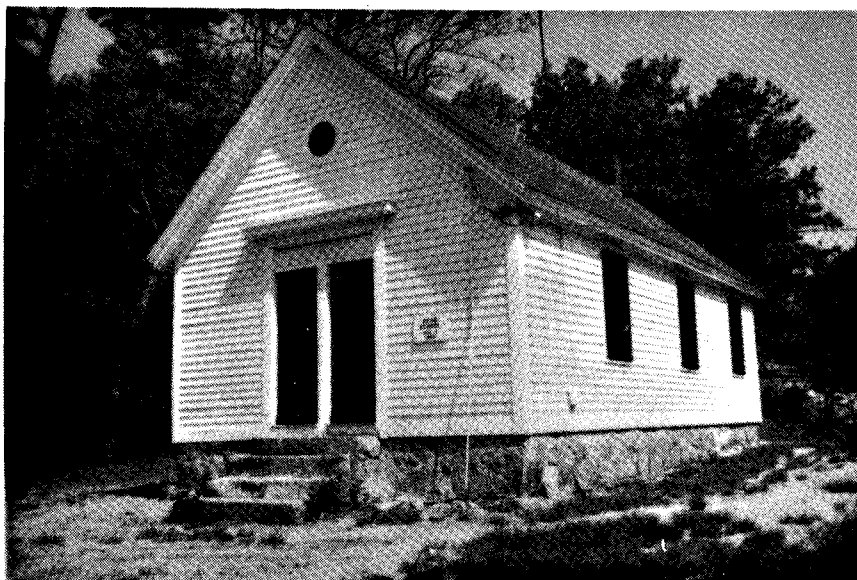
Anthony is located between Washington and Quidnick on the southwestern branch of the Pawtuxet, commonly known as the Flat River. Much of the land facing what is now the center of Quidnick from across the river was known as "Greenville" in the eighteenth century, for here, overlooking the river and the family forge, the Greenes built the "Homestead" occupied by the future General Nathanael Greene who came to Coventry to take over the management of the family's interests. The Nathanael Greene Homestead (1774), located at the foot of Taft Street, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is a National Historic Landmark. Nathanael Greene went on to become one of the foremost military leaders in the Revolutionary War. The present village is named for Richard and William Anthony who, with several others, formed the Coventry Company in 1805. Using the water rights sold to them along with a sawmill and gristmill by Jacob Greene (brother of General Nathanael Greene), they started spinning cotton in one of the first cotton mills in the state. This was a small wooden mill, eighty feet long, built in 1806. It was replaced by a 6-story mill in 1810, said to be the largest in the state at that time. They also built a machine shop for Perez Peck, near Peck's Pond. It was here that Peck and Sisson developed the Sisson power loom. A company-owned village was laid out with several streets of substantial 2-family houses. The village was largely a Quaker settlement, and the 1825 Quaker Meetinghouse still stands, although not used for its original purpose. In 1873, the old mills were dismantled and the 1810 mill survives as a 3-story warehouse. A 5-story stone mill was erected with an impressive tower belfry and elaborately embellished with granite and brick. The mill is still used for textile manufacture and has been recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Because of its location between Coventry's two other important village and manufacturing centers--Washington and Quidnick--Anthony has a large population and many buildings dating from the first decade of the 19th century survive. Due to its continued prosperity throughout the 19th century, there are also a considerable number of fine residential and commercial Victorian buildings.

ANTHONY, ARNOLD and BOSTON STREETS

- 1-A. Coventry Company Housing (1810): Substantial, 2-story, 2-family houses with gable roofs and large center chimneys, providing fireplaces in every room and separate baking ovens. There are separate entrances at the gable ends. Over forty such houses were built by the Coventry Company as housing for the mill workers in their cotton mill; the majority survive.



Paine House (c. 1748); Station Street, Washington.
(Map # 42-Q)



Read Schoolhouse (1831); Harkney Hill Road.
(Map # 50)